

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Jim Hunt. His role in developing and assisting the small businesses in north-west Missouri will be difficult to replace. I commend his record of service and accomplishment to the entire region over the years and I am honored to represent him in the United States Congress.

CONGRATULATING MR. CHUCK  
EKLEBERRY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 12, 2006*

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Chuck Ekleberry of Hickory Creek, Texas for publishing his first book of poetry titled "Out of the Knight". Mr. Ekleberry, an engineer by profession, started writing poetry 4 years ago and has since written over 200 poems.

With the help of his mother and friends, Mr. Ekleberry was able to assemble the collection of poems for the book. His ability to take a hobby and turn it into a work such as "Out of the Knight" shows his passion and dedication to literature.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Chuck Ekleberry on his first publication of poems. His contribution to the arts community of Denton County should serve as an inspiration to us all. I am honored to represent Mr. Ekleberry in Congress.

RECOGNIZING EMANCIPATION DAY  
IN THE CARIBBEAN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 12, 2006*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to pay tribute to a significant national holiday recognized by the nations of the Caribbean that commemorates the emancipation of the slaves in the British Empire on August 1, 1834. This day celebrates arguably one of the most important events in the history of mankind to that date, preceding the end of slavery in the U.S. by some thirty years. It certainly was the beginning of the freedom of people of African descent in the British Caribbean.

Slavery has existed in various forms throughout most of recorded history. Because of its widespread nature, emancipation was not a single occurrence, but rather an action that took place at different times in different locations depending on the colonial power. Set aside as an anniversary marking the birth of liberty from legalized control, violence and enforced labor, the first day of August, Emancipation Day, serves as a reminder of how long and arduous the Caribbean's long walk to freedom actually was, encompassing the years leading up to the liberating act and the many years of colonialism which followed as a struggle to secure the promise of freedom.

The values and freedoms we exercise daily have come with a price. Freedom is never given freely. The emancipation of slaves in the Caribbean signified the emergence of a more civil and just society. However, there is unfin-

ished business in regards to the recognition and atonement given to this important period in history. We must continue to look for ways that adequately address the legacy and history of slavery and lead to an appreciation of the struggle for liberation.

It behooves all of us, jointly, as well as individually, to mark one of the most significant events in world history. I enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the Carib News opinion editorial written by Dr. Harold Robertson, Trinidad and Tobago's Consul General in New York and thank him for providing a very detailed account of the path many Caribbean nations took to freedom. Although there still remains a lot to be done, by celebrating our past and our accomplishments, we are building a stronger foundation to build the future upon.

[From the NY Carib News, Aug. 2, 2006]

STATEMENT FOR EMANCIPATION CELEBRATIONS  
2006

(By Dr. Harold Robertson)

The Trinidad and Tobago Consulate, in collaboration with TATIC (Trinidad & Tobago Independence Celebrations, Inc.) recently marked their Emancipation Day on Friday, July 28, with a celebration at the T & T Consulate in New York. The Consul General Dr. Harold Robertson was the keynote speaker who delivered the following address: "Today's event is the Consulate's annual celebration of what is arguably one of the most important events in the history of the British Caribbean and indeed in the Western Hemisphere—the Abolition of Slavery and the legal transformation of African slaves to free individuals.

Emancipation as a legal decision was not restricted to the British Caribbean since slavery was also not restricted only to that region. Slavery existed in virtually the entire western hemisphere (with the notable exception of what is now Canada), in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Moreover, because of its widespread nature, abolition of the institution was not a single occurrence but rather, an action which took place at different times in different locations, dependent upon the colonial power.

What cannot be gainsaid is that in this hemisphere slavery was instituted for two basic reasons. Eric Williams in his seminal work *Capitalism and Slavery* postulates that the impetus was economic; and that the economic trigger was the decision by the metropolitan powers to develop the new world as a source of sugar. Sugar plantations required labor, cheap labor, without which the great development of the Caribbean in the 17th, 18th and early 19th Centuries would not have been possible. There is certainly much evidence to support this view; but one can take some issue with Williams' other assertion that the use of Africans as slave labor in the Caribbean and elsewhere "in no way implied the inferiority of the Negro".

Based on these two pillars, the institution of African slavery began with the importation of a dozen Africans to serve as personal slaves to wealthy Portuguese in 1441, and went on to subsist for some four centuries during which it is conservatively estimated that approximately 50,000,000 persons were transported from Africa to the new world.

By the late 18th Century, early 19th, slavery in the British Empire however was under sustained attack on two fronts. One was the economic—the plantation system had embarked upon a long slow decline, it was still profitable but the world was changing, with the industrial revolution exerting stronger influence. This was coupled with the growing sentiment of humanitarianism in Britain. Economic decline and humanitarian agita-

tion in and out of Parliament led to the great day, 1 August, 1834, when the abolition of slavery was encapsulated in the coming into effect of the Emancipation Act.

It is worthy of mention that Britain was not the first country or place to end slavery in the western hemisphere; that distinction belongs to the then Colony of Rhode Island which, caught up in the revolutionary fervor of the time, abolished slavery in 1774. Revolutionary France abolished slavery in 1789, only to have it re-instituted by Napoleon. Again in our hemisphere the next country to abolish slavery was Haiti which in defiance of France drafted its own Constitution in 1801, which abolished slavery in Saint Domingue for all time. In spite of efforts by Bonaparte's France to recapture St. Domingue the end result was failure and on 1 January, 1804 Dessaline's Government adopted its declaration of independence, changed the name of the country to Haiti and confirmed Toussaint's ending of slavery. Simon Bolivar's campaigns led to the end of slavery in Spain's mainland colonies in South America in the early 19th Century.

These were the precedents to the Emancipation of Slaves in the British Colonies—but what in practical terms did the end of slavery mean for the British Caribbean. The first and most obvious effect was the transformation of 540,559 African Slaves from chattel slavery to legal freedom. For those of us familiar with the economic and demographic reality of the Caribbean today, the picture on 1 August, 1834, doubtless makes for interesting observation. The number of slaves set free in the individual British territories reveals the following: Jamaica—255,290; British Guyana (now Guyana)—69,579; Barbados—66,638; Antigua—23,350; Grenada—19,009; St. Vincent—18,114; Trinidad—17,539; St. Kitts—15,667; Dominica—11,664; St. Lucia—10,328; Tobago—9,078; Bahamas—7,734; Nevis—7,225; Montserrat—5,026; British V.I.—4,318.

The second critical factor was the decision of the British Parliament not to compensate the former slaves for their oppression, humiliation and degradation but rather to pay the slave-owners for the loss of their property. Parliament in London allocated 20,000,000 (over 1 billion dollars in today's currency) for that purpose.

The British abolition was followed by similar actions among European powers—France ended slavery in 1848 following another period of revolutionary activity; Sweden in 1846, Holland in 1863. Slavery in the remaining Spanish Caribbean was ended not from Madrid but within the colonies themselves, with Puerto Rico ending slavery in 1873 and Cuba in 1880. The last major regional country to emancipate its slaves was Brazil which ended the institution in 1888.

All of this brings us to the USA. Emancipation did not come to the United States until 1 December, 1865, when Congress ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. It was that amendment, eight months after Lincoln's death which abolished slavery in the United States.

The foregoing, in snapshot, provides a picture of the events which we celebrate today. For us in the Caribbean, emancipation and its repercussions served to trigger the events leading to the emergence of modern society. In those islands and colonies where land was available, the freed slaves generally refused to work for their former owners. They abandoned the plantations in favor either of forming their own free villages or engaging in other activity.

Faced with a labor crisis, Caribbean plantation owners reacted in the only way they